

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Melissa Bean's Internet safety bill, SAFER NET, passed the U.S. House of Representatives Tuesday night by a vote of 398 to 6.

The bill, H.R. 3461, is the first of its kind to call for creation of a national education campaign on Internet safety. Congresswoman Bean, a mother of two, said she has heard from parents across Illinois' 8th District about the need for more help in protecting their families from predators lurking on the Internet.

"This started for me with my own kids," Bean said. "They were using social networking sites and had no idea of the potential risks. Our nation has learned how to educate kids about 'stranger danger,' and we've taught them how to avoid trouble when they're at the park and walking home from school. But with today's Internet society, the playground has gotten much bigger."

SAFER NET, or the Safeguard America's Families by Enhancing and Reorganizing New and Efficient Technologies Act, has three components. First, it authorizes \$5 million for a national public awareness campaign through the Federal Trade Commission. The campaign will include some common sense tips on how to protect your bank account, your identity and your children from victimization on the Internet.

Second, the bill calls on the FTC to become a national clearinghouse for existing resources on Internet safety, making it easier for schools and parents to find reliable information. Federal government resources, non-profit sites, local and national law enforcement resources will all be linked through the FTC's existing OnGuardOnline program. Information will be available at <http://onguardonline.gov/>

"Entering 'Internet safety' into a Google search gives you 169 million possible entries," Bean said. "There are plenty of good resources out there. But we have to help people find them."

Also, the bill encourages increased industry accountability, by establishing a working group through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to review and evaluate industry efforts to promote online safety and protect children from inappropriate

material online.

Bean's bill is part of an Internet safety initiative moved by the House this week, which included passage of two other bills she was proud to cosponsor.

Bean helped introduce H.R. 3845, the PROTECT Act (Providing Resources Officers and Technology to Eradicate Cyber Threats to our Children Act). The bill, authored by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) will build a strong nationwide network of highly trained law enforcement experts to track down known sex offenders. It provides resources for following offenders' Internet footprints online.

Bean is also a co-sponsor of H.R. 719, the KIDS Act (Keeping the Internet Devoid of Sexual Predators Act). The bill, authored by Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND), requires sex offenders to register their e-mail and instant message addresses with the National Sex Offender Registry, as they now register their physical addresses.

Both bills passed Wednesday.

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